

# Project Fact Sheet: International Building Exhibition Africa

## The challenge and opportunity

Urbanisation in Africa is developing at a historically unprecedented speed and scale. According to the UN, the urban population on the continent will double by 2040, putting 1 billion people in need of employment and services. The growing need for affordable housing caused by the processes of rural-urban migration and endogenous growth will be a huge challenge for the decision-makers at various levels of government. The need for investments and infrastructure to meet the rising demands of this fast urban growth is pressing and considerable: an equivalent of about 130 “Berlins” will need to be built in the coming 25 years. And, indeed, urban and infrastructural investments are lining up. Whether these will be integrated into effective and future-oriented urban planning and provide new perspectives for the largely poor and informal urban population is, however, uncertain.

The continent’s challenge and opportunity is to realise the potential of becoming the role-models of how to build cities of the future in an entirely new way, minimising the ecological and social risks of rapid growth and maximizing its socio-economic potential. A new development path and integrated approaches need to be found for this monumental task. A paralysis or failure to manage urbanisation sustainably from an economic, social and ecological point of view would have serious consequences such as a continued rise in urban poverty and inequality, fragility, conflicts and informality. This challenge even has planetary dimensions: for instance, if the future urban neighbourhoods are built with traditional carbon-intensive building materials such as cement and steel, the construction alone would eat up 80% of the CO2 emission budget for the 1,5 °C goal according to the German Advisory Council on Global Change.

African leaders and experts need innovative models how the complex challenges of urban transformation in Africa can be solved sustainably and implemented by new service delivery models. While some approaches and technologies to deal with this task exist, they are still emerging and receive only limited attention. This is among other due to the lack of a powerful African platform on which innovative technological solutions and new approaches can be presented and discussed.

## IBA – an innovation generator for sustainable urbanisation

When facing similar situations of pressing societal and structural transformation in the past century, Germany and

other European countries successfully employed the experimental urban development approach “IBA”. An *Internationale Bauausstellung* (German for International Building Exhibition) is a vehicle for urban and regional development with an impact that usually extends far beyond its own time. Over a period of 8 to 10 years, IBAs have developed trend-setting and sustainable solutions to the key question of future development within a city or region. The results of an IBA, including real neighbourhoods/buildings and model projects, are presented to an international audience at the end of the term. While it is not the only approach available for solving wicked urban issues, IBAs have had historical relevance in moments of great transformation and shifting social demands.

The IBA experiences of the past decades, in particular, linked local challenges with overarching global challenges like climate change, population movements and economic growth. For example, the IBA Hamburg turned the most neglected districts of the city into laboratories for experimentation, under an international spotlight. The projects developed exemplary construction models, climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions, and created new answers regarding fractured urban fabric and transitional zones, combining growth and sustainability.

The heart of every IBA is its projects. They generate the answers to the key question of the IBA formulated at the beginning and are its central results. IBAs marry a strategic top-down with a participatory bottom-up approach that taps into and mobilizes the energies of the diverse actors and cultural communities that make up a city.

### Key Features of an IBA



The proclamation and organisation of any IBA depend on its initiators from local and regional government level, civil society and other private actors. There is no committee or similar that decides whether or not an IBA may take place. Therefore, there are no explicit means made available to an IBA. Instead, the initiators who desire to set up an IBA must acquire the means to finance it. The financial contributions usually come from public and private funds.

## What the IBA approach may hold for African cities

By exploring the potential of an IBA in the African context, the GIZ project “IBA Africa” aims to activate an innovation generator for the future planning and building of cities in Africa. The benefit of an IBA or other innovative, output-oriented approach for African cities lies in demonstrating, as an example for the entire continent, how sustainable urban transformation can succeed even in the face of time pressure, enormous complexity and trade-offs.

IBAs aim at delivering future-oriented “next”, not best practice, must be adaptable across the region and “tangible” to a wide audience. In the African context this may entail solutions of how to spatially integrate and structurally enhance informal urban districts, promote energy-efficient and employment-intensive construction methods, use local and low-emission building materials, test new approaches to participation as well as new delivery mechanisms for integrated project implementation and financing.

International and regional cooperation increasingly focuses on the development and promotion of urgently needed solutions for the urban challenges and opportunities in Africa (e.g. managing informality, keeping costs affordable, creating spaces worth living in). Through its powerful platform, an IBA could contribute to a new, future-oriented planning and building culture in the countries affected by the rapid pace of African urbanisation.

In short, an IBA may serve as a vehicle for new modes of implementation, for leveraging innovative urban projects with long-term impacts and scale-up effects, and for making its host city a lighthouse across Africa on how sustainable urban transformation can succeed.

### Further Resources:

**Official IBA website:** <https://www.internationale-bauausstellungen.de/en/>

**IBA Memorandum:** <https://www.internationale-bauausstellungen.de/en/iba-memorandum/>

**IBA Hamburg:** <https://www.iba-hamburg.de/en/story/iba-hamburg.html>

**IBA Heidelberg:** <https://iba.heidelberg.de/en>

**IBA Vienna:** <https://www.iba-wien.at/en/>

**Sassen/ Sennett on qualities of an IBA**  
<https://vimeo.com/64719212>

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## About GIZ’s IBA Africa project

Just like an IBA, GIZ’s “IBA Africa” project has got exploratory and experimental features. It is an internally financed strategic project of GIZ with limited time-span and resources. The project aims at making expertise around the IBA approach available to interested African decision-makers and experts and potentially prepare a concrete case for an IBA-type experience in Africa. Starting in August 2019, the project will continue through to November 2020. During these 16 months, the project will interact with stakeholders in selected African countries.

Thought leaders such as the African Centre for Cities, the German IBA Council of Experts, the London School of Economics (LSE) Cities and the Alfred Herrhausen Gesellschaft (AHG) contribute to this exploratory process.

A partnership has been established with the city of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. This collaboration is embedded in a multi-stakeholder collaboration of the Addis Ababa city government, GIZ, LSE Cities and the Alfred Herrhausen Gesellschaft. Jointly they set up the city government support system “Addis Ababa Urban Age Task Force”, with which the “IBA Africa” project is linked. The purpose of this task force is to assist with governing complex urban challenges and includes joined-up advisory activities and capacity building. Its particular focus is on identifying urban development pilots for strategic interventions across the interrelated areas of housing urban intensification, accessibility and streets, green and blue infrastructure as well as integrated planning and governance. Linked to the work in the thematic strands, the Addis Ababa Task Force will explore a possible key theme, prerequisites, success factors and considerations for the temporal and institutional implementation for an experimental urban development approach like an IBA in Addis Ababa.

The second exploration process is planned in the city of Cape Town, South Africa. A core partner in this process is the ACC (African Centre for Cities). A first week of in-depth engagements and workshops will take place in March 2020 to kickstart the process.

The results of these collaborations will be captured in a summary report or short IBA proposal. Furthermore, a practical guide on the IBA approach in the context of an urbanising Africa will be developed and widely disseminated across the continent. The guide will, among other, present key themes, preconditions, success factors, financing possibilities, implementation models of an IBA or similar approaches. If the approach proves relevant and gains local traction, the project might kickstart the process towards the proclamation of a first locally adapted African-type of IBA.

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